

FRANCESTOWN HERITAGE COMMISSION  
Minutes of November 15, 2012 Public Meeting

Present: Maureen vonRosenvinge, Barbara Caskie, Diane Curran, BJ Carbee,  
Elly Miles  
Excused: Michele Ferencsik  
Absent: Betsy Hardwick, Becky Meattley

Also Present: See Attached Attendance List

Maureen vonRosenvinge opened the meeting at 7 PM and introduced the two architects, Susan Phillips-Hungerford and Michael Petrovick, who would be presenting their conceptual drawings for the Town Hall renovation. Susan's architectural firm is located in Peterborough and Mike's firm is located in Keene. Both architects have had experience with historic restoration and preservation of buildings.

Maureen stated that a public meeting to present the plans was an LCHIP requirement but that the meeting would be informal with the architects first discussing their designs followed by a general question and answer session. She said that the architects had been requested to submit informal drawings for interior and exterior renovation that maintained the structural integrity of the building and which could also stand alone by floor to make segmental implementation possible. This would allow time to develop community consensus as to design and uses of the building and avoid duplication of work. Maureen also said that PDF's of the plans would be made available for review and download from the Commission website: [info@francetownheritage.com](mailto:info@francetownheritage.com).

Susan presented her designs first, displaying them against the wall to maximize visibility. She said she based her plans on Code requirements and her understanding of possible/probable uses of the building. Her focus was to utilize existing spaces where possible rather than adding to the building.

First floor seating of 234 people would require 4 bathrooms (3 men/women/handicapped placed in the front of the building and one behind the stage).

The second floor accommodating 117 people had two unisex/handicapped access toilets.

Access between the two floors would be accomplished with a lula, a small lift for passenger transport, accommodating one person in a wheelchair with an attendant or 3 people. A lula is electric, works with a key and is meant for limited use by those unable to use stairs. It is considerably less expensive than an elevator and requires less space.

Her plan retains the front entrance providing handicapped access by an extended, gradual elevated ramp sidewalk leading to the doors with a 2-step walk-up on either side. The present outside fire escape would be removed. The present addition housing bathrooms at the rear would be removed. A small two-story stairway with a place of refuge would be constructed in that area. This rear addition is designed to maintain window placements and light sources for the second

floor. Susan suggested a rusticated base to dress up the foundation.

Mike followed Susan with his presentation of two variations for renovation while retaining the historic structure of the Town Hall. He also based his planning on Code requirements and agreed with Susan as to capacity. He mentioned that the Code did make some allowances for historic issues. However, since Town Hall functions house the public he didn't feel applying for allowances was advisable. He also planned his designs with the intention of leaving the existing building intact.

Mike's first design (Design A) was a 3-story addition to the rear of the building. He would retain the front entrance as is. The primary entrance/exit would be in the lower level vestibule of the addition (Basement). Stairs and an elevator would provide transport to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor (stage) and 2nd floors. Men's and women's bathrooms would be housed in the addition at the 1st floor level. The front rooms would remain intact.

The second design (Design B) is similar although the footprint is smaller. A lula would replace the elevator and the bathrooms would be smaller.

Maureen said that Design A requires more land than is available. She did not foresee purchase of additional land as feasible. She suggested that the Q&A session be restricted to Design B and Susan's plan. She asked that both sets of plans be arranged along the wall and opened the meeting for questions and discussion.

Concerns centered mainly around cost, future use of the building, stage modification, and bathroom facilities.

#### Ballpark Estimated Price:

For construction only, MP Plan with 3-stop elevator: \$250-\$300 per sq. foot -- \$550,000

MP 2nd Plan with lula:

-- \$375,000

For construction only, SPH Plan with 2-stop lula: \$200 per sq. foot -- \$250,000

As an aside Maureen stated that no tax money had been used for the design preparation.

#### Bathrooms:

The current addition in the back containing the bathrooms would be removed with either plan.

Comments that there were too many bathrooms. Was Code relief possible if number of people were limited? Could there be 3 instead of 4 with one handicapped-accessible per floor? Is a unisex handicapped bathroom consistent with Code requirements?

The advisability of the single toilet in the Grange closet was questioned in view of the historical graffiti there.

Mike Petrovick's plan could incorporate bathroom space on 2nd floor if needed by extending the back addition.

Stage:

Question as to whether stairs to stage not needed. They are removed in SPH design. Concern was expressed re making the stage smaller. SPH design removes 4 feet from right side and replaces with storage space.

It was asked whether other methods for storage should be investigated. Storage under stage is not possible

without fire suppression system.

Uses:

There was discussion re using the 2nd floor for conference room(s) and for parties. Receptions for weddings in conjunction with services at the Meeting House was suggested as one possibility. Both plans retain the current kitchen on the 2nd Floor. Any use of the 2nd floor would require handicapped access and facilities.

Maureen said that feedback to date indicates that residents want historic uses of the building continued, i.e., Town Meeting, classes, theater productions. In terms of continuing stewardship and maintenance, uses that generate income are important.

Where do we go from here? People can look at the website. The architects will do narratives as to how they arrived at design decisions. There was general agreement at this meeting that both plans had desirable features. A chat space will be made available so that people can offer additional ideas and suggestions.

It will take time to get a consensus regarding all aspects of design and usage.

The Commission will hold a 2nd public meeting in January (date TBA) to summarize resident input and to extend discussion of design and future use topics.

Respectfully submitted,

Elly Miles

FRANCESTOWN HERITAGE COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING

NOVEMBER 15, 2012

ATTENDANCE

Stephen Griffin  
Judy Badd  
~~Elly Miles~~  
Diane Curran  
Peter Byley  
Teresa Avery  
Edward Graham  
Muriel Graham  
Betty Bekins  
Shirley Gudwin  
Joseph A. Ludden  
Francelle Carapetyan  
William  
Joe Com (LARRY AMES)  
Gordon  
Derek  
Barbara Cashie  
By  
Nancy M. Ruz  
Brooks Ruz  
Janet Hazel  
Robt Dave Adams

Harriet C. C. C.  
Nancy C. C. C.  
H. C. C. C.  
Janet S. Griffith  
Bella C. C. C.

Elizabeth Hunter Lavalier

Meredith Allen

Waring Kibler

E. B. Tye Tye  
J. B. C. C. C.

Allen, J. C. C.

Ch. C. C.  
C. C. C.

W. L. S. H. D. H. C.

W. L. S. H. D. H. C.

W. L. S. H. D. H. C.